

INFORMATION REPORT

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DATE DISTR. 27 OCT 50

COUNTRY Czechoslovakia

SUBJECT Sandrik, National Corporation,  
at Dolni Hamry

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1. In 1945 the Sandrik firm, which was well known for its cutlery and silver before the war, became the main component of a national enterprise which included several small cutlery and silver plants in the vicinity of Ceska Trebova (P50 N28), several knife plants near Mikulasovice in Northern Bohemia, and all razor-blade factories in Czechoslovakia. The enterprise was dissolved in 1949, but some of the plants formerly under Sandrik have applied to the Ministry of Industry for permission to use the Sandrik name because of its prestige. Sandrik has currently two subsidiary plants, a knife factory in Stos and a copper hammering plant at Malacky.
2. The Sandrik plant is located at Dolni Hamry 12 km from the railroad and in a narrow valley, which is 100 m wide and extends from the east into the Hron south of Zarnovice. This location is too remote for a national corporation, and in addition there is a shortage of office space and of executive personnel. The manager of the plant and of the national corporation is Stefan Hruskovic, a Communist who is a self-made man and is popular with the workers because of his constant support of their cause. All important positions in the enterprise are filled by either his friends or his relatives, and all of his superior officers are powerless to take action against him.\*
3. The Sandrik plant in Dolni Hamry employs 1,400 people and is composed of old buildings which are largely one-story structures and in good condition. A new machinists' shop was built in 1946 and has all modern equipment. The plant equipment consists of two rolling mills (valcovaci stolice) for silver and alpaca, six presses for kettles and large dishes, three spindle presses for cutlery, 20 metal-pressing lathes,\*\* six special knife-blade sharpening machines (two of which are modern English models bought in 1948), many engraving machines (gravirovac), 40 polishing machines, and plating baths (galvanicke kartinelni lazne).
4. In addition to silver and cutlery, the production program includes gasoline cans similar to the ones that were delivered to Germany during the war. Experiments in electrolytical polishing (kulickove a elektricke lesteni) and friction polishing by means of small steel balls in a revolving drum have also been

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made in order to find a substitute for the expensive manual polishing. To date, however, these experiments have not proven successful.

5. Before the war Sandrik's silver products were of good quality and were exported to Switzerland, Holland and Sweden, but since 1945 the output has declined in quality. The firm produces only old patterns and foreign products are now superior. The Anticoro stainless steel delivered by the Poldi Ironworks is also of very poor quality. Furthermore, the local price of silver is so high that finished goods find little demand in the export market. An attempt to find a market in the U.S. failed, despite the fact that in Czechoslovakia wages are five times lower than in the U.S.
6. The military importance of this plant is slight. Its only contribution would probably be in the production of gasoline cans and possibly hand grenades.

Plant at Stos.

7. Before the war there were several small knife-manufacturing workshops in Stos; the largest was the Vlaslovic shop which also produced sabres for the Czech army. All of them were located in very dilapidated buildings. In 1946 it was decided to incorporate all of the workshops into one enterprise, and in 1947 construction of a new factory building was begun. In 1948, however, the structure collapsed because of faulty design, but it was rebuilt and completed by the end of 1949. The old shops had very primitive equipment; the new plant will obtain new machinery such as sharpening machines and electrical annealing equipment.
8. This plant, which covers an area of 7,000 sq. m, lies east of Stos on the outskirts of town on the road to Modzev. It has no military significance.

Plant at Malacky.

9. This factory, which was nationalized in 1948, has no importance. It is engaged in hand hammering of copper kettles for home stoves.

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\* Comment: In celebration of the plant's 50th anniversary in 1946, Hruskovic, who was at that time only the plant manager, distributed 1,000,000 Kcs among the workers without any authorization and despite the fact that the factory was faced with a debt of 12,000,000 Kcs. The area and national enterprise managements in Bratislava, which had forbidden this extravagance, were nevertheless unable to prosecute or punish him.

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\*\* Comment: A metal-pressing lathe is one which uses a buffer-like object for shaping instead of knives.

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